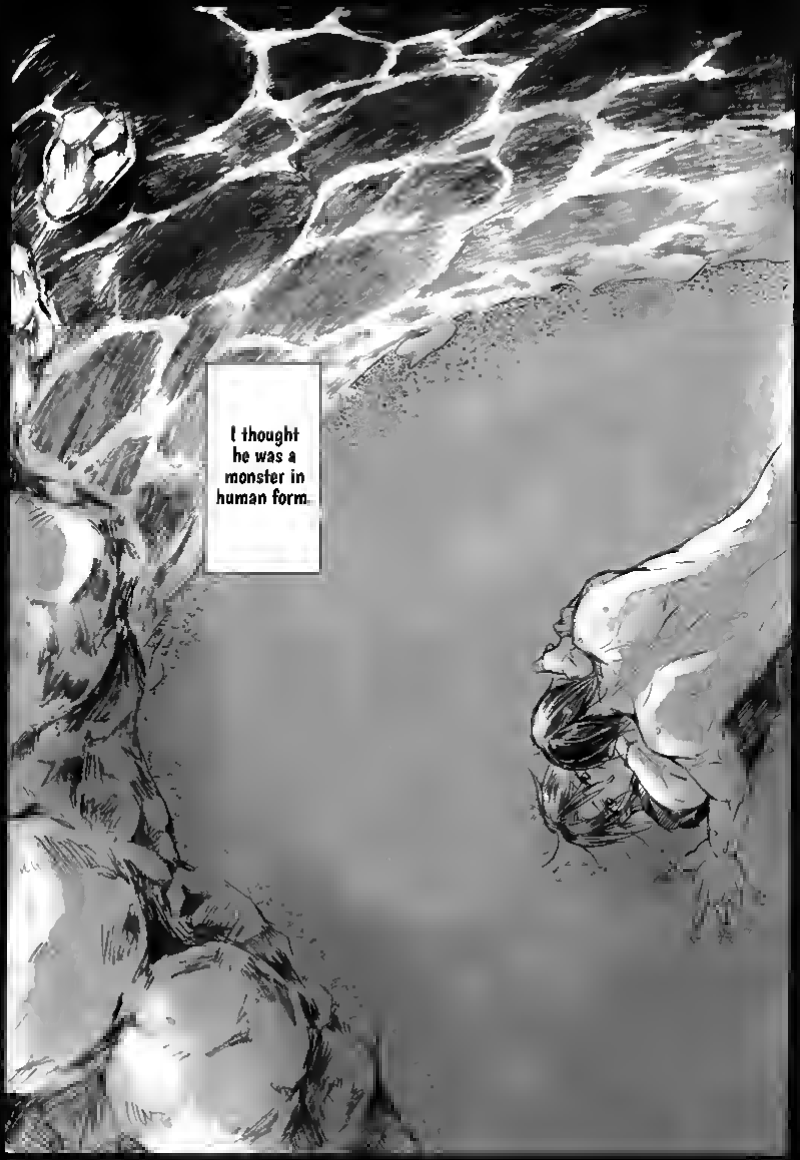
そしてうろこは泡と散る

OH,
YOU WANNA SEE?
HM?
LOOK.
IT'S ALL HEALED UP NOW.

OI--
HEY HEY, THAT'S NOT A WOUND.
lick
WHAT?
FEELIN' BAD NOW?
HEY--
CUT IT OUT
THAT TICKLES!

By the calm sea on
a moonless night...

I found him.


I thought he was a monster in human form.

SO? HAVE YOU GOTTEN USED TO IT YET?
LIVING WITH NANASHI-SAN?
I... GUESS
AND... THINGS ARE GOING BETTER THAN EXPECTED
NAGISA-KUN SAID IT MUST BE INCONVENIENT NOT HAVING A NAME!
NANA ...?
WHAT?
NANASHI-SAN!
HMHM!
BUT... I FEEL BETTER NOW!
BETTER?
HE'S EASY TO HANDLE IF YOU GET HIM IN THE WATER SO I GUESS IT'S FINE
THAT...
HE'S NOT YOUR PET!

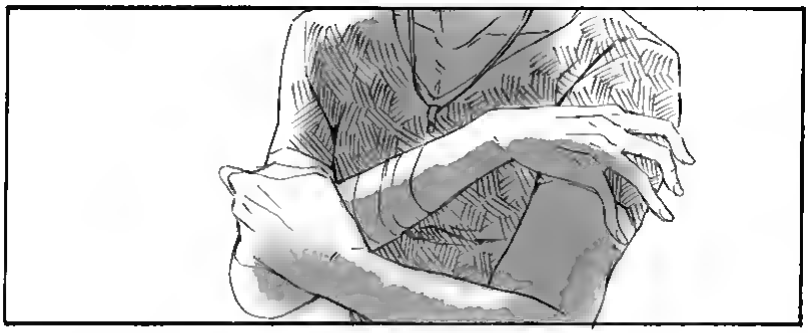
TO TELL THE TRUTH,
I WAS REALLY WORRIED!
IT WAS QUITE A SHOCK AT FIRST,
YOU SAYING YOU TOOK IN A STRAY HUMAN AND WERE GOING TO LOOK AFTER HIM.
HE HASN'T "TAKEN" TO ME...
AWW, C'MON!
AND NANASHI-SAN SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN TO YOU AS WELL!
BUT...
IT LOOKS LIKE I WAS WORRIED FOR NOTHING!
Y'KNOW...

YOU'VE SEEMED REALLY...
GENTLE, LATELY.
SO...
I'M KINDA HAPPY!
turn
C'MON, LET'S HURRY AND FINISH UP SHOPPING!
NANASHI-SAN'S PROBABLY LONELY SITTING AT HOME ALONE!
.....

GENTLE...
HUH?

What about me has changed...

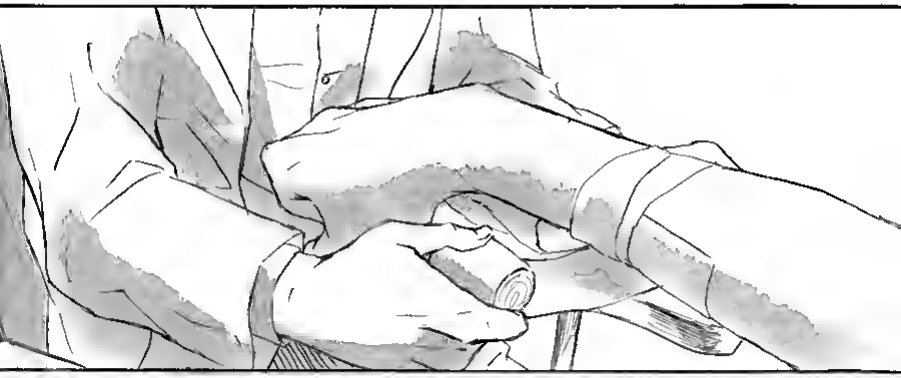
...ever since taking him in...?



I don't know anything about him.

His name, his age, where he lives...

Not even his voice.



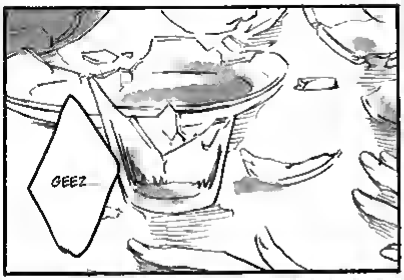
THIS IS A FIRST
smooth
DRAGGING SOMETHING LIVING FROM THE OCEAN

HE'S...
HUMAN...
RIGHT?

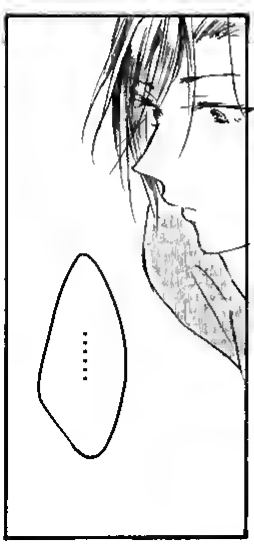
Those eyes...
He had no signs of suffering violence...
So he... washed ashore?
No, no...
I...
COULDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE...

. . .
WHERE THE HELL...
. . .DID YOU COME FROM?
OPEN

GEEZ, WHAT WAS WITH THAT 'LET'S HURRY HOME' SPIEL?
SHE HAD US OUT FOR AGES!
THOUGH, WELL...
SHATTER
LIWAH!
WH-
WHAT THE...
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?!


GEEZ...

YOU REALLY DID A NUMBER ON MY DISHES AGAIN, HUH...


.....

tremble

ARE YOU HURT?
HEY-- ARE YOU OKAY?

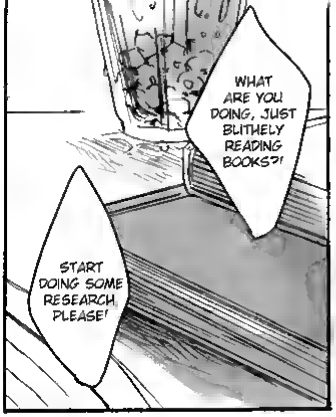
ALL RIGHT, I'M GONNA GET THIS CLEANED UP.
CAN YOU STAND?
wobble
.....
STUMBLE
!
HEY--

WHUMP
WHOA...
YOU...
I DIDN'T REALIZE
THE DOCTOR SAID THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY PROBLEMS
YOUR LEGS...
YOU STILL CAN'T USE THEM PROPERLY?

I GUESS NOW'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY...
BUT THAT REMINDS ME, I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN HIM WALK...
or soaking
either sleeping
push
DON'T TAKE THEM OFF!
frown
AH--- HEY!
HOW'S THE FIT?
ARE THEY TOO TIGHT?

SO...
WANNA HEAD OUTSIDE FOR A BIT?
YOU CAN PRACTICE WALKING.
ALL THE BETTER IF YOUR LEGS AREN'T IN PEAK CONDITION.
YOU CAN'T SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE COOPED UP IN HERE.
WE'LL GET YOU USED TO IT LITTLE BY LITTLE, 'KAY?
SO, IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR PLACE...
...YOU WANT TO GO, THEN?

THE OCEAN?
MAN...
I JUST CAN'T CATCH A BREAK...


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, JUST BLITHELY READING BOOKS?!
START DOING SOME RESEARCH, PLEASE!

HEY!
NAGISA-KUN!!
I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUT SHOPPING WITH RIN-CHAN TO-DAY!

PLEASE UNDERSTAND HOW I FEEL HAVING TO HELP YOU!
EH?!
IT'S MORE DISRESPECT-FUL *NOT* TO READ THEM ALL!
BUT LOOK AT ALL OF THE BOOKS HERE!

SHH!
AH!
Oops!

tap tap

NOW NOW.
LET'S JUST TAKE A BREAK!
YOU'RE BORED, AREN'T YOU?

OH YEAH, REI-CHAN!
LET'S GO BY RIN-CHAN'S PLACE ON THE WAY BACK!
whisper
I WANNA SEE NANA-SHI-SAN!
THAT WILL DE-PEND ON HOW YOU PACE YOUR WORK...
grab
SO-- NO MORE OF THIS!
AWWW!
YUP!
I WAS READING ABOUT THE LITTLE MERMAID!
...
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDER-SON?
IT'S SO SAD!
BUT KIND OF ROMAN-TIC TOO-- TURNING INTO BUB-BLES
I--
CAN'T REALLY RELATE TO HER.
YOU CAN'T?

THEY EAT HUMANS
Y'SEE
YUP!
SCARY STORIES?
SCARY ONES ABOUT MER-MAIDS!
OOH THAT REMINDS ME ABOUT STORIES I HEARD AS A KID
THEY'D LURE IN PEOPLE WITH THEIR SONGS,
THEN EAT THEM, IN ORDER TO MATURE
THERE USED TO BE MER-MAIDS LIVING AROUND HERE
THE SEA'S A DANGEROUS PLACE, SO THE STORIES WERE TO SCARE KIDS AWAY
IT'S JUST A LEGEND/ FOLKLORE!
AH
AH!
DID I FREAK YOU OUT, REI-CHAN?
SOME-TIMES BLOATED CORPSES WASHED ASHORE
IT WAS SAID THEY WERE THE LEFTOVERS

BUT THE IDEA THAT MERMAIDS EAT HUMANS
IT JUST SEEMS FARFETCHED...
THAT'S UNEXPECTED
YOU BELIEVE IN ALIENS, AFTER ALL
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T BELIEVE
THERE ARE LOTS OF MYSTERIES IN THIS WORLD!
NO, JUST..
I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO A MERMAID...
...IF THEY COULDN'T EAT A HUMAN...
.....
I... WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...
HM?
HM...
GOOD QUESTION...
I DON'T REALLY KNOW...

...MAYBE THEY'D TURN INTO BUBBLES?
LIKE IN THE FAIRY TALE!
OKAY.
CARE-FUL, NOW.
YOUR FOOTING'S WEAK, SO TAKE IT EASY.
Excited
SEEMS LIKE HE'S IN A GOOD MOOD.
Excited

I SPOKE TOO SOON
SPLAT
topple
dash
AH-- HEY!
HERE
TAKE MY HAND
COME ON
pat
EASY NOW...
EASY...

ONE, TWO...
ONE, TWO...
ONE TWO...
THERE YOU GO
SEE? THERE YOU GO!
HAHA,
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU ANYWAY?
YOU FORGET HOW TO WALK?

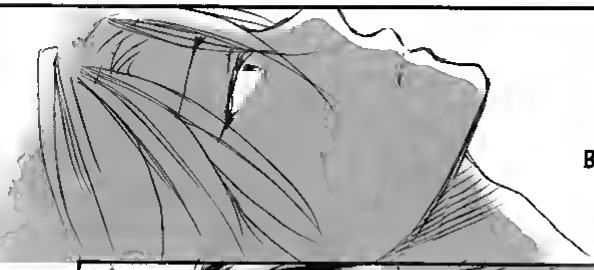
THIS...
...IS WHERE I FOUND YOU
HEY...
WHY THE OCEAN?
BUT I GET IT
THE SEA HAS THE ABILITY TO STEAL EV- EVERYTHING FROM YOU IN A SINGLE MOMENT.
AND YOU'RE NOT SCARED?
AND YET... WE STILL FIND OURSELVES DRAWN TO IT.

Y'KNOW?
MAYBE YOU'RE LIKE THAT TOO.

YOU...
REALLY ARE CLUMSY!
TRIP
topple
WH-
HEY!
WHUMP

OW... HAHA...
MUTUAL DESTRUC-TION, HUH?
SORRY,
GUESS WALKING ON SAND WAS A BIT OF A TALL ORDER, HUH?
EVEN I...

For...just a moment there...



I wasn't sure if I could move a muscle...

But...

WHUMP
NNGH
HM?
shake
OH A BATH?
exhausted
MAN...
I'M TOO OLD TO PLAY ON THE BEACH LIKE THAT
.....
.....
SOR-RY.
I'M BEAT
LEMME NAP FOR AN HOUR
UGH
THE FATIGUE IS JUST...

WHAT'S GOING ON...?
I FEEL... RELAXED?
brrrrr...
MAGICA
brrrrr...
brrrrr...

brrrrrr...

To be Continued...